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# Fourth Time's the Charm?: Modeling a Psychologically-Based PEACE IV Program in Northern Ireland

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# Fourth Time's the Charm?:

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## Modeling a Psychologically-Based PEACE IV Program in Northern Ireland

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**Abstract:** Social conflict has consumed Northern Ireland for centuries. The relationship between Catholic Nationalists and Protestant Loyalists has proved difficult to reconcile—current policy approaches have been unable to attain peace. This paper seeks to explore the gaps in policy created by ignoring the important distinction between the social identities Nationalists and Loyalists have created and which they continue to perpetuate. This paper examines Social identity theory in context of Northern Ireland and applies the psychology of disparate community identities to current policies and trends in Northern Ireland to suggest reasons for a lack of progress towards peace. Unfortunately, contemporary Northern Ireland does not fully address the divisive social identities that have existed for hundreds of years. Finally, this paper offers suggestions to incorporate social identities into future policymaking by offering three-pronged approach to a PEACE IV program including: Resettlement Intervention, Generational Development, and Individual Reconciliation. If policymakers in Northern Ireland are able to embrace Social identity theory and work through its constraints, they have an incredible opportunity to solve an issue that continues to plague this nation and prevent a spiral into another civilian warfare.

Although Northern Ireland rarely makes international news these days, the country remains in a violent political stalemate. The levels of violence in Northern Ireland remain well below the most heated period of conflict, “The Troubles,” but have remained steady since throughout the officially declared “post-conflict era.” The religious, political, and cultural divides that catalyzed centuries of conflict in Northern Ireland still exist today. Politicians from both sides have tried, with varying candor, to solve the problems that obstruct progress towards peace in Northern Ireland. Ultimately, though the country has achieved a plateau, they may spiral back into warfare. Current policies in Northern Ireland aimed at reconciliation fatefully ignore the psychology underlying the conflict. Although the nation stands in a stalemate, they doom themselves to repeat the past if policy-makers cannot bridge the damning group dynamics which have been permanently etched into society. Only through difficult but necessary and effective changes in immigration, education, and interpersonal relationships in Northern Ireland will the country ever achieve true reconciliation.

Today, Northern Ireland faces deep issues that stymie efforts towards reconciliation. Political psychologists have begun to ask why the changes implemented between the 1990s and 2012 have been unable to achieve peace. The answers the literature exposes come in response to questions deal with group psychology and the stereotypes that Protestant and Catholic communities still hold concerning one another. When individuals band together to form a group, their psychology changes. Community dynamics emerge and behaviors metamorphose to fit the characteristics of the community. Unfortunately, the historic conflict in Northern Ireland epitomizing intercommunity conflict as civilian warfare between Nationalist Catholics and Loyalist Protestants. In the fight over the determination of Northern Irish identity— as either

British or Irish— the Northern Irish people have been unable to forge a joint identity (Leach, Williams 1999)

The European Union has played an important role in helping Northern Ireland recover economically since the time of the Troubles. As the EU contemplates a PEACE IV Program to build upon its previous three PEACE programs, it must consider why the fallout from the Troubles has not yet been solved. In this paper, I explore the historical background of Northern Ireland that still contributes to current problems; discuss those current issues; address the disparate Irish Catholic Nationalist and British Protestant Loyalist identities; and present a three-pronged solution to advance peace. Ultimately, I conclude that social identity theory can explain many of the issues keeping Northern Ireland from true reconciliation and that the EU can address these issues through a PEACE IV Program by funding Resettlement Intervention, Generational Development, and Individual Reconciliation. Only when Northern Ireland has support in addressing the roots of their conflict will they make substantial progress towards peace.

### **I. Historical Framework: Basis for Current Divides**

During the British occupation and colonization of Northern Ireland over 300 years, the country split into two factions: Irish Catholic Nationalists committed to opposing British dominance, and British Protestant Loyalists who considered themselves a part of the colonizing forces. The distinction has carried over to the modern day. Catholic Nationalists consider themselves Irish citizens whereas Protestant Loyalists consider themselves British citizens (Hancock 2008, 205). Even non-church attendees identify as Irish Catholics or British Protestants, serving to illustrate how deeply entrenched their identities remain (Cairns 1998, 759). These identities became defined in the early 20th Century with the Partition of Ireland in which Protestants segregated the Catholics physically and “barred them from all offices, land

ownership, schooling, and other avenues leading toward wealth and education” (Hancock 1998, 3). Analysts point to the historic political and economic oppression of Catholics in Northern Ireland as an important factor in the continued conflicts.

The structural, political and economic history of Northern Ireland brewed deep resentment and played an important role in causing the conflict. Control of the government by Unionists placed Nationalists at a distinct disadvantage. Protestant-run governments used their power to deny economic opportunities to Catholics. A very small percentage of Catholics held higher-level positions in the public sector by the 1950s. Catholics were concentrated in lower skill and lower paid jobs and had a higher rate of unemployment overall (Hancock 1998). Furthermore, because of these economic difficulties, Catholic children were far more likely to leave school early in order to join the workforce (Cairns 1998, 758). This disenfranchised many Irish Catholics. Prior to the civil rights movement in Northern Ireland, businessmen earned extra votes in elections and only property owners were allotted votes. A lower economic status for most Catholics prevented them from participating in government. Many of these short-term economic and political decisions marginalized Catholics and polarized Northern Irish society (Hewitt 1981, 363). By forming stronger bonds within their own community, Catholics were able to care for themselves and their families. This helped Catholics support one another but split them even further from Protestant communities.

Ultimately, it was the Catholic Nationalists who banded together to pursue equality in the 1960s. Spurred in part by the civil rights movement in the United States, Catholics engaged the civil rights battle in Northern Ireland. The development of the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association (NICRA) marked the first formal campaign to extend full civil rights and liberties to Irish Catholics as a way to correct the disadvantages they perceived. Catholic Nationalists

launched this campaign to fight for those of the same identity— to receive equal rights as Protestants aligned with the British government. Through marches and protests, modeled after the American civil rights movement, the NICRA pursued a following of supporters. Historians often point to the first violent march – the Duke Street March – as the start of the Troubles. In response to the violence of the Duke Street March and other ongoing tensions, the Irish Republican Army gained traction and instigated attacks against the RUC and other British forces. In response, Britain sent in the British army and more RUC forces—permitting them to use deadly force to quell attacks. Though many of the British forces used rubber bullets to subdue protestors, the bullets often resulted in death or permanent damage, sometimes harming children. Catholic Nationalists channeled their rage into more attacks, which incited the Protestant Nationalist communities to employ their own civilian armies. The Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF) pitted against the IRA caused the destruction of lives, infrastructure, and the economy in Northern Ireland over a period of 35 years. The Troubles wreaked havoc on Northern Ireland unparalleled in its history. Scholars trace this havoc to the desperately opposed social identities.

The 1994 ceasefire agreement prompted the Northern Irish peace talks. However, a formal peace agreement did not emerge until the Good Friday Agreement in 1998. The IRA, refusing to decommission their weapon, slowed peace talks. In January 1996, as a part of the decommissioning process, the Mitchell Report on decommissioning was published in Belfast. But just days later, the IRA blew up a bomb in London, halting the peace talks. Months later, elections were held in Northern Ireland to define the parties allowed to participate in peace talks. Sinn Fein, the Nationalist Catholic political party closely aligned with the IRA, won 15% of the vote but was denied a place in the peace talks because the IRA refused the ceasefire. Violence continued and talks slowly progressed. On July 20, 1997, the parties issued a final ceasefire

notice still in effect today. Finally, after years of negotiations and continued violence, the Protestant Loyalist and Catholic Nationalist political parties signed the Good Friday Agreement on April 10, 1998 (Melaugh, 2012).

The Belfast Agreement adopted full civil liberties for all citizens, defined the makeup of the Northern Irish parliament, called for the decommissioning of all terrorist arms, and restructured police forces in the hopes of maintaining a more balanced police commission. Most importantly, the Good Friday Agreement, concluded that Northern Ireland would remain a part of the United Kingdom, but that Northern Ireland would gain succession if the citizens of Northern Ireland ever passed a majority vote to leave the United Kingdom (Smyth 2012). To date, this has not happened, but murmurs of an attempt to pass a referendum on the topic emerge from time to time (Smyth 2012).

The official end of the violence, however, does not offer the full story. Even after the ink had dried on the page of the April 1998 Good Friday Agreement, attacks continued. The IRA-instigated Omagh bombing in August 1998 killed 29 people — a higher figure than those killed in any single bombing before the peace agreement. The Omagh bombing sparked national outrage (BBC1998). Though the Omagh bombing still marks the largest number of people killed in a single bomb in Northern Ireland, the peace process has not been successful. Levels of violence have certainly decreased from the height of the Troubles, but Northern Ireland still suffers from sectarianism.

## **II. Current Problems: The Violence Northern Ireland Still Faces**

The policies of Northern Ireland have fallen short of achieving reconciliation. An obvious barrier to peace emerged in late July of this year when the Real IRA (RIRA) and Republican Action Against Drugs (RAAD), both informal segments of the officially disbanded IRA, joined

forces and announced a call to action for Republicans. A coalition of independent and violent Republican groups also joined the merger. The newly-formed IRA paramilitary group threatened violence if the British government does not remove its troops from Northern Irish territory in an internationally published timeline. This statement, eerily reminiscent of the IRA during the Troubles, showcases the dissent still apparent in Republican politics. Calling the campaign for Irish freedom a “necessity of armed struggle,” the IRA’s statement made it clear that the goals of the IRA in years past have not been abandoned — nor have their tactics been abdicated (McDonald, 2012). The reemergence of dissident paramilitary groups further suggests that Northern Ireland has been unable to escape its past. Paramilitary groups not only create strong identities for the members of the paramilitary, but they help shape perceptions within and outside of each community as a whole. The rejoining of paramilitary groups suggests that not only do these groups have enough members to continue their existence, but that they have enough support from their communities— even if just implicit support— to pursue their violent political aims.

Other issues have sprung to the surface in recent post-ceasefire years. Although the Troubles have technically ended and both paramilitaries have declared ceasefire, paramilitary and sectarian attacks still occur. In fact:

- There were 376 cases of rioting and 1,014 disturbances in interface areas of North Belfast between 1996 and 2004. Over the same period there were 3,864 cases of criminal damage and 1,327 assaults in the areas.
- Northern Ireland Housing Executive data indicates that from 1991/92 an average of 1,378 people seek rehousing every year because of sectarian, racist or paramilitary intimidation.
- [F]igures indicate that interface barriers remain a presence in many urban areas and that at least 17 barriers have been built, extended or heightened in Belfast since the ceasefires of 1994.
- There are also indications that attacks on school properties and on public transport are a widespread problem, although it is not possible to disaggregate sectarian attacks from anti-social behaviour and criminal activity



(Jarman 2005)

The reports of attacks do not tell the whole story. Not only is it impossible for police to collect data on every report, but these reports only come from sections of the country. The overall number must be far higher. A personal account from a Protestant leader in Derry, an almost entirely Catholic city, asserted that every boy over the age of 10 in his Protestant community had been hospitalized from sectarian attacks (Brown 2012). The levels of violence have greatly diminished from the days of the Troubles, but they still exist at troublesome levels. Rampant sectarianism remains in Northern Ireland. The competing Catholic and Protestant communities continue to oppose one another.

But Northern Ireland faces other problems that perpetuate sectarianism as well. Segregated schools have “been seen by many as either promoting or maintaining community differences that contribute to the conflict. This is thought to happen because the segregated schools present children with two very different views” (Cairns and Darby 1998). When communities socially segregate their children, they breed hatred through the retelling of a one-sided history. Many Protestant and Catholic children do not meet a member of the opposite community until well into their teenaged or adult years (Brown 2012). Segregated students understand the opposing community through stereotypes and overt generalizations— they have no friends in the other community, so they have few opportunities to develop personal relationships and empathy for the other community’s members. Perhaps most fundamentally, segregated schools keep students thinking about the other community as an “other.”

Separate schools divide the two communities socially, but interface barriers divide the communities physically. Sometimes called peace walls, these barriers do not encourage peacefulness. Often the site of sectarian violence, interfaces were built in Northern Ireland to

decrease contact between Protestant and Catholic communities in the hope of promoting peace. Most of the urban violence occurs along interface lines, which typically divide working class neighborhoods (Walsh 2011). Unfortunately, officials have promoted interfacing in the post-Troubles era. Officials have commissioned a number of new barriers post ceasefire across the country arguing that barriers remain necessary to contain the violence. But instead of containing violence, interfaces seem to incite it.

Though foreigners find interfacing disturbing and bizarre, it has become typical in Northern Ireland. Today, 58 such walls exist in Belfast alone. In fact, young people have taken to “recreationally rioting” against “the other” in both Protestant and Catholic communities along interface lines (Jarman and O’Halloran 2001). Some riots include shooting or throwing petrol bombs over the interface line directly into the other community. Interface boundaries offer a distinct line between communities, defining each side by their own identity and denying the communities integration.

Not only is there an official ethos of separate but equal, but an infrastructure underpinning it. There are three times as many so-called peace lines — elaborate walls separating working-class neighborhoods — than there were at the height of the Troubles [...] (Cullen 2010)

The walls separate communities both physically and socially. Stereotypes persist because neither side builds relationships with “the other” and both sides continue to perpetuate violence against the opposing community.

### **III. Theoretical Analysis: A Political Psychology Perspective**

Scholars in Northern Ireland have investigated for decades why conflict arose there. Explanations have included economic factors, the religious differences between Catholics and Protestants, and majority/minority dichotomies. But none of these explanations can explain both

the severity and continuity of the conflict. The economic model concludes generally that political violence stems from economic motivations (Jennings 1998). In Northern Ireland, the literature concluding that the Troubles were primarily economically motivated suggests that paramilitants acted for financial and material gains. However, in the years since the ceasefire, intercommunity violence has increased and political violence has continued. Any economic motivators for paramilitants were overshadowed by the negative effects on the larger economy. “The constant threat of bombings, high cost of security, and lack of a stable internal market” (Hancock 2008) did not create a path to jobs growth or economic development. Northern Ireland struggles with the economic fallout from the Troubles today as it continues to weaken (BBC 2012). Nor do religious factors offer a holistic explanation of the conflict. Even if “religion and ethnicity clearly reinforce one another” (Woodwill 2005) in Northern Ireland, the way Protestant and Catholic communities continually ingrain community differentiations surpasses the differences themselves. Finally, a third explanation for the conflict, the majority/minorities statuses of Loyalist Protestants to Nationalist Catholics, has offered incomplete conclusions for the conflict as well. Establishing the majority and minority statuses of Protestant and Catholic communities in Northern Ireland remains a difficult task (Stevenson et. al. 2007). Catholics in Northern Ireland comprise 41% of the population, with all other non-Catholic Christians making up 41.8% of the population. However, 40% of Northern Irish people consider themselves British, while only 21% consider themselves Irish (NISRA 2011). The aggregated British Protestant Loyalist and Irish Catholic Nationalist identities do not fit neatly into any numerical categorization carried out by the Northern Irish census. Three of the main schools of thought in the Northern Irish conflict do not adequately address issues still relevant today.

A theory first proposed without reference to the Troubles offers a fuller explanation for Northern Ireland. Social identity theory incorporates aspects of economics, religiosity, and majority/minority status. Social identity theory traces the issues in Northern Ireland the ways Catholic Nationalist and Protestant Loyalists define themselves explains their tendency towards violence towards one another. Social identity theory emerged as an explanatory force not only in Northern Ireland but also around the world. Although sometimes criticized as only containing explanatory not predictive power, social identity theory fortifies conflict theories and deepens reconciliation tactics (Waddell and Cairns, 1986).

Unlike the theories that espouse economics, religion, or majority-status as the instigators of violence, social identity theory offers a more multifaceted explanation. It concludes that individuals within societies like Northern Ireland view themselves as a part of a group defined in part by its absolute and fundamental difference from another group. In practical terms, British Protestant Loyalists view themselves as inherently different from Irish Catholic Nationalists, and vice versa (Gallagher 1994). These conceptual differences ingrain biases against the other community and perpetuate stereotypes. Social identity theory incorporates economic differences perpetuated by one social group against another. Lower economic status of Catholics may have bred deeper resentment by Catholic Nationalists, but deeply ingrained biases against Catholics lead Protestants to disadvantage them economically. Social identity theory ultimately explains the root cause of the issue.

Religion also acts as an important differentiator within social identities. "Religious identification offers a distinctive 'sacred' worldview and 'eternal' group membership, unmatched by identification with other social groups" (Ysseldyk, Matheson, and Anisman 2010, 60). These aspects of religion make it a main component of social identities in Northern Ireland.

Scholars differentiating Protestant Loyalists and Catholic Nationalists just by their religion (i.e. Protestant vs. Catholic) are not incorrect in their assessment— they simply use these categories as names for distinct social identities. Finally, majority-status, while too difficult to objectively compute, also falls under social identity theory. Social identity theory seeks to understand the individual's conception of their status. An individual's conception of their status can spur group action as it did when Republican Nationalists struggled to attain greater social status in the 1960s civil rights movement. For decades, social psychologists have chosen to analyze social conflicts through the lens of social groups. Social identities offer the fullest explanation for the inception and continuation of violence in a Northern Ireland because it can identify the line that social groups draw between themselves (Cairns and Mercer 1999).

For a group to manifest a specific social identity, members must beget “a cognitive [component], in the sense of awareness of membership and an evaluative one, in the sense that this awareness is related to some value connotations. The third component consists of an emotional investment in the awareness and evaluations” (Tajfel 1982, 2). Essentially, community members in distinctly divided communities have an awareness of their membership and value it. If such a group receives external confirmation of its existence, the designation of community distinctions begins to emerge (Crisp, Hewstone, and Cairns 2001, 510-512) Many political psychologists now frame the way cultural, ethnic, and religious conflicts transpire in terms of social identity theory (Ysseldyk, Matheson, and Anisman 2010).

Community favoritism can emerge as a function of social identities. The more closely group members identify with their group, “the more they will tend to treat members of the [other community] as undifferentiated items in a unified social category, rather than in terms of their individual characteristics” (Tajfel 1982, 36) This favoritism evolves into stereotypes and

prejudice between communities. Intercommunity conflicts tend to be predicated on these stereotypes. In ethnic conflicts, ethnocentrism provides a rationalization for perpetuating social violence. Ethnocentrism closely aligns with the creation of social stereotypes which permit community members to disregard the individuality of members in the outgroup. Instead, social stereotypes provide the impetus to exploit prejudices against the other community (Livingstone and Haslam 2008).

Unfortunately, further scholarship suggests that as much as ingroup/outgroup dynamics cause conflict, conflict in turn bolsters these dynamics. “Not surprisingly, it appears that intergroup conflict can enhance the cohesion of members of the ingroup. When pitted against a common enemy, members of the group tend to bind together” (Tajfel 1982, 15). The more conflict, the tighter a community pulls together, maintaining the conflict despite compelling reasons to cease violence. At a certain point in a conflict, it becomes unclear as to whether the group dynamics sustain the violence or whether the violence sustains the group dynamics. This explains how group identities for Protestant and Catholic communities evolve: in opposition to one another.

Social identity theory fits Northern Ireland because of the makeup of the country. Ethnic minorities in Northern Ireland make up only 1.8% of the population (NISRA 2011, 2). Countries with less clear distinctions between their two communities, countries that may not even have two distinct communities but still have social conflict, may not fit this model. Certainly some of social identity theory’s basic tenets would have to be reworked to apply to all social conflicts. Social identity theory also finds limitations in Northern Ireland because it has never been applied in public policy. Postulating on the nature of a conflict does not guarantee successful public policy for solving the conflict. If contextually applied, social identity theory offers hope for

successful public policy in Northern Ireland, but offers no guarantee because it has never been tested.

But to solve an enduring conflict between opposed communities, a society like Northern Ireland must address the underlying psychosocial issues framing the conflict. Without a catalyst to make amends, resentments simmer beneath the surface underlying every political and social advancement and hindering true progress. To ignore the psycho-social elements of conflict in the reconciliation process ensures that a society consumed by conflict will never find a true egress. How easily a community can forgive depends on the length and severity of the injury. The longer and more injurious the damage, the more difficult resolving the issues becomes. Individuals who highly identify with their community are more likely to make excuses for their group's actions and feel less guilt. People who identify less with their community are more likely to feel guilt and thus more likely to facilitate making amends. Public policy supporting reconciliation should not place a focus on past transgressions because strong community members will see their community as "right" (Hewstone and Kenworthy, et. al. 2008 and Myers, Hewstone, and Cairns 2006, 110). Furthermore, those most affected by Northern Ireland's conflict will likely be least willing to forgive. Though as time passes, their emotional wounds will continue to heal (McLernon, Cairns, Hewstone, et. al. 2004, 599). Unfortunately, forgiveness between communities remains difficult to achieve because individuals are easier to trust than entire communities. In Northern Ireland, issues persist because the length and severity of the injuries of both groups against each other persevered for generations. The death tolls from the Troubles mark the highest levels of civilian murders. The people of Northern Ireland have a difficult time establishing a path towards reconciliation in part because their violent history continues today.

A joint community in Northern Ireland does not exist today. In pursuing reconciliation, different emotions motivate different actions— either towards or against reconciliation. Empathy most highly correlates with positive emotions and positive steps towards reconciliation. Without empathy, community members do not ascribe human emotions to members of the other community (Tam, Hewstone, et. al., 2008). Although not universally true, in the case of Northern Ireland, community favoritism indicates disfavoritism towards the other community. The means to creating positive emotions and decreasing community favoritism appears to be contact with the other community (Tam, Hewstone, et. al., 2008).

Other studies have built on the discussion of intergroup forgiveness and conflict resolution by laying out steps to achieving reconciliation. These steps include: decreased prejudice and improved intergroup relations, promoting intergroup forgiveness to replace bitterness, and building trust across the divide. Segregation contributes to prejudices between communities. Mixed friendships exist in Northern Ireland but in small numbers and they are usually maintained by foregoing discussion of religious or political issues. Putting the two communities in contact with the other reduces anxiety and hatred between the communities overall (Hewstone, Kenworthy, et. al., 2008). Unfortunately, though many hypotheses have been offered and tested, few public policies have been built off of these findings.

#### **IV. Policy Analysis: A PEACE IV Program**

Implementing reconciliation tactics between individuals in Northern Ireland remains a remarkable challenge. Although the peace process began in 1998, current policies reflect the difficulties officials still encounter trying to maintain peace. The largest efforts, in terms of funding, come from the European Union's PEACE initiatives. Each program offered different policy initiatives. The PEACE I program provided €500 million between 1995 and 1999 to ease



the transition from warfare to ceasefire. The funds had numerous broad purposes including: "... social inclusion, economic development and employment, urban and rural regeneration, and cross border co-operation" (European Commission Office 2004). The funding provided support for local grassroots organizations to tackle community problems. But because PEACE I could not solve all of the problems created by the Troubles, the EU further funded a PEACE II initiative that gave roughly the same amount of funding to the same issue areas as PEACE I during 2000-2004. The second did not involve civil society to the extent of the first. PEACE II allocated only 5% of its funds for social inclusion (European Commission Office 2004). Neither of the first two PEACE programs allocated enough funds for social inclusion to address the issues of social identity, nor did either of the two programs directly address identity issues.

Neither the PEACE I nor the PEACE II project identified decreasing animosity between Protestant Loyalists and Nationalist Catholics as a priority for the funding initiatives. While aiding the economy and cross-border cooperation remain incredibly important in Northern Ireland, one cannot underestimate the importance of the social identity divide in creating and enhancing social issues in Northern Ireland. PEACE III got closer to addressing the issues causing by disparate identities by offering mediation services in Northern Ireland and "by providing opportunities for young people to meet and explore their beliefs, culture, heritage and traditions" (Special EU Programmes Body 2010). Unfortunately, each of these components of the program took only a small portion of the funding, reached only 16 providers and 607 young people (respectively), and still did not hit the heart of the issue: the violently opposed social identities. As the EU reviews PEACE III and potentially moves on to building a PEACE IV Program, the time has come to put the majority of emphasis on reconciling Protestant Loyalists and Catholic Nationalists through decreasing the divide between their social identities (Special

EU Programmes Body 2010). In face of the evidence for using social identity theory to frame policies to advance peace, the EU should allocate funding in a PEACE IV with a three-pronged approach addressing social identity issues through Resettlement Intervention, Generational Development, and Individual Reconciliation. This policy offers concrete, accomplishable goals to progress Northern Ireland towards reconciliation.

Resettlement Intervention offers solutions on a societal level, the EU can intervene in the Nationalist/Loyalist dynamic by encouraging the immigration of those entirely outside of that dynamic. Individuals from vastly different cultures do not associate as Irish Catholic Nationalists or as British Protestant Loyalists. Resettling those individuals in Northern Ireland would create a buffer between Protestant Loyalists and Catholic Nationalists. Though the literature on immigration and Northern Ireland generally focuses on people immigrating to other countries from Northern Ireland, the current levels of migrants to Northern Ireland has grown from historic levels (Gilligan 2008, 1). The bipolar culture of Northern Ireland benefits immensely from the diversity that immigration brings to the country. In fact, according to a survey conducted by the Northern Ireland Life and Times found “that more than two thirds of people think that migrant workers make Northern Ireland open to new ideas and cultures suggests that potential areas of tension are not likely to be around cultural conflict” (Gilligan 2009, 2). Simply offering new identities helps Northern Ireland to move past a ‘one or the other’ stereotype. The Northern Ireland Assembly in their extensive report on immigration between 2000 and 2010 concluded:

The various migrant populations who have arrived in Northern Ireland since the millennium have brought with them, not only their skills and experience, but also their traditions, music, food and language. Ten years ago, Northern Ireland was a relatively insular and inward-looking country. Today, it is a vibrant and culturally diverse society. Our new residents deserve credit for contributing to this transformation (Russell 2012, 6).

The Northern Ireland Assembly essentially concluded that natural immigration has been an important factor in progress for Northern Ireland— Resettlement Intervention harnesses the benefits immigration has already brought to Northern Ireland and magnifies them by increasing immigration in the future. Although one cannot determine with certainty, it stands to reason that an increase in cultural traditions could contribute to greater diversity and cultural tolerance. The influx of new cultural and individual identities creates more “others” that Protestant and Catholic communities will not be able to mesh with their standing stereotypes of the singular “other.” This challenge to social stereotypes and an expansion of social identities may prove to improve societal relations in Northern Ireland in general. The EU can make important strides by funding the Resettlement Intervention through advertising Northern Ireland in other countries, funding social programs for language acquisition, and helping new immigrants find jobs. Although immigration undoubtedly brings its own set of social issues, perhaps a society less crippled by a Republican/Protestant divide will have a greater ability to handle the new issues.

A PEACE IV Program could make generational strides as well. A Generational Development initiative in Northern Ireland would address social identities for young people by funding and promoting desegregated charter schools that include a component of reconciliation in the lesson plans at every grade level. The EU’s funding for a Generational Development program would help solve social issues in the younger generations before they fully form. The desegregated charter school model has been tested by social psychologists in Northern Ireland—and it works (Hewstone, Kenworthy, et. al. 2008). Neither the state (Protestants) nor the Church (Catholics) control the charter school so it functions as a neutral zone for students. These schools can focus on decreasing prejudice and improving intergroup relations, promoting intergroup forgiveness to replace bitterness, and building trust across the divide which causes mixed

friendships to develop naturally. Because segregation builds prejudices between groups, neutral, reconciliation-oriented charter schools work to deconstruct those prejudices (Hewstone, Kenworthy, et. al. 2008). Strong correlations exist between forgiveness and community identification (Hewstone, Kenworthy, et. al. 2008). Other studies have concluded the same: that intergroup contact promotes peace (ex: McGlynn 2004; Dovidio, Gaertner, and Kawakami 2003; Slavin and Cooper 1999; Brewer and Kramer 1985). Integrated schools in Northern Ireland have a deep and lasting effect on the willingness to reconcile of their students (McGlynn 2004).

Desegregated schools work to increase peace with a respect for diversity. An atmosphere of respect for diversity and to develop the individual identities of the various students in desegregated charter schools makes political education and proudness of political heritage important characteristics. Studies conducted throughout Northern Ireland conclude that intergroup contact through foras like charter schools promotes peace (McGlynn 2004). Northern Ireland currently suffers from a dearth of desegregated schools because currently 97% of schools remain segregated. By funding charter schools well and employing outstanding staff, the EU has an opportunity to make these schools desirable to both Catholic and Protestant parents who want their children to have a good education and succeed. This funding path opens a generational solution to attain peace.

Numerous nonprofit organizations sprang up in Northern Ireland during and after the Troubles to help individuals reconcile. Individual Reconciliation provides the final platform for the three-pronged peace efforts advanced in this paper. Nonprofits in Northern Ireland offer the basis for local social movements towards reconciliation (Acheson and Milofsky 2008). They play an important role in mobilizing individuals in the peace process. Their progress in Northern Ireland has unfortunately declined in recent years because the PEACE II process took much of

the nonprofit community's power away. However, a strong civil society sector, built in part by the nonprofits of Northern Ireland constitute building block of democratic governance (Acheson and Milofsky 2008). To make strides in reconciliation, the nonprofit sector in Northern Ireland must be supported.

To encourage and support the work of reconciliation in Northern Ireland, the government needs to offer financial assistance to nonprofits which further these goals. Grassroots activism breaks down boundaries between the two communities. Building individual relationships and healthy friendships between young people helps to ensure that the younger generations do not devolve into conflict like their predecessors. By dealing with social identity theory and how it affects the individual, nonprofits dedicated to reconciliation can attack violence at its root. Financing NGOs across Northern Ireland falls directly in line with the goals of PEACE I. PEACE I funded initiatives directed at reconciliation. This effort made progress, but not enough because it was cut short and did not widely fund reconciliation non-profits, choosing only a small number to direct funds towards. Direct reconciliation funding constituted only a small portion of the budget for PEACE I. Because the funding for PEACE I stopped in 1999, a funding gap developed. A potential PEACE IV could further the goals of PEACE I and finally achieve its aims.

## **V. Conclusion: Hope in Northern Ireland**

Over centuries, the chasm between Catholics and Protestants has defined the daily lives of the Northern Irish people. From their individual and group identities, to their schools and jobs, Catholics and Protestants live in separate communities. The issues run deep. But when the tensions violently erupted in the 1960s, few knew the Troubles would last so long or have such an enduring impact. Today, Northern Ireland still struggles to control its violence. Violence

governs daily lives for many Protestants and Catholics. Policymakers in Northern Ireland must intervene with effective solutions to keep the issues from re-escalating.

The European Union has offered huge amounts of monetary assistance to Northern Ireland since the early 1990s. While their projects have been helpful in some areas of Northern Ireland, they miss a key piece. Conflict exists in Northern Ireland today because of the deeply divided identities. Only when policies erase the division through decreasing prejudices will the violence lessen. Social identity theory offers a full theoretical basis for the EU to pursue policies in Northern Ireland that advance peace. Resettlement Intervention will bring more people to Northern Ireland—immigrants who do not identify as Protestant or Catholic. Without the duality between Protestant and Catholic communities, immigration can buffer the hatred between the two groups. Perhaps even more importantly, Generational Development will stop the problems before they start by building relationships between communities through integrated schools. Teaching young people the values of diversity, reconciliation, respect and empathy for all creates forgiving young people who grow to be non-violent adults. Developing forgiveness in this prime demographic stops the cycle of violence from continuing into the next generation. Finally, Individual Reconciliation can make strides at the personal level. By funding nonprofits who work on reconciling individuals and healing individual biases, prejudices, and emotional wounds, the a PEACE IV program from the EU has the opportunity to mend the injuries of older generations as well. By bringing new people into the country to offset the dynamic between Protestants and Catholics, teaching the new generations about peace, and healing old wounds, this type of PEACE IV program has the focus, the power, and the policy to help Northern Ireland find its path to peace.

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